

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION ON DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH COMIC STRIPS

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Abstract: The research was conducted to find out the effectiveness of comic strips to teach English reading comprehension on descriptive texts to Year-7 students of “SMPN 22 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2014/2015. The research method was a quasi-experimental research with one group as experimental group and another group as the control group. The subject of the research was class VIIB as experimental group and class VIIC as control group. The research data were collected by a test. Both groups were given pre-test and post-test to measure the students’ ability of reading comprehension. The data was analyzed by effect size formula. The obtained effect size was 0.61. It was larger than 0.51 but less than 1.00 and be categorized as moderate. Thus, the effectiveness of comic strip to teach English reading comprehension of descriptive texts to Year-7 students of “SMPN 22 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2014/2015 was moderate.

Key words: Comic Strips, Teaching Reading Comprehension, Descriptive Texts.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui efektivitas dari komik strip untuk mengajar pemahaman membaca bahasa Inggris pada teks deskriptif untuk siswa kelas tujuh "SMPN 22 Pontianak" di tahun ajaran akademik 2014/2015. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah quasi-eksperimental dengan satu kelompok sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok lain sebagai kelompok kontrol. Subyek penelitian adalah kelas VIIB sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan VIIC kelas sebagai kelompok kontrol. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dengan tes. Kedua kelompok diberi pre-test dan post-test untuk mengukur kemampuan siswa dari membaca pemahaman. Data dianalisis dengan rumus effect size. Effect size yang diperoleh adalah 0.61. Jumlah ini lebih besar dari 0.51 tetapi kurang dari 1.00 dan dikategorikan sebagai moderat atau sedang. Dengan demikian, efektivitas komik strip untuk mengajar pemahaman membaca bahasa Inggris pada teks deskriptif untuk siswa kelas tujuh "SMPN 22 Pontianak" tahun ajaran akademik 2014/2015 adalah moderat atau sedang.

Kata Kunci: Komik Strip, Mengajar Pemahaman Membaca, Teks deskriptif.

Reading is one of language skills that students need to learn. It is a skill to comprehend the writer's ideas or the way the writer communicates with readers by written words. Pang, et al. (2003) explains, "Reading is about understanding written texts". A successful communication between the writer and the reader that is they should understand at the same language. Comprehension is aim of reading. The result of comprehension is the reader able to obtain the information after they are reading and understanding the text.

In teaching reading, the students need to develop the ability to read by themselves. An independent reader must be able to tackle text that she/ he have never seen before. Pang, et al. (2003) refer comprehension to "the process of deriving meaning from connected text". To conclude, teaching reading comprehension is activity which is done by the teachers to help their students to get knowledge or information from the texts. The goal of teaching reading comprehension to make students able to comprehend the contents and aspects of a descriptive text, such as: explicit and implicit information, vocabulary related to the text, the structure and the characteristics of descriptive text.

To teach reading skill, an English teacher needs to be creative. Teaching reading is not simple especially in teaching at a junior high school because most of the students are not able to comprehend the text in English well. The teacher may encounter problems in teaching reading because the students do not participate actively in reading. Thus, they get difficult to comprehend the text. They usually feel that reading in English is boring. They also ignore how to approach the material. In this case, it can make the teaching learning process ineffective and the students will get the consequence such as they do not know what the teacher explains.

According to the students, the above problems may be due to the use of monotonous media by the teacher. Reading media play an important role in reading activity. If the media support the learning process, the students may achieve well in learning. Most of the discipline problems in the classroom are caused by such factors as boredom, not understanding the relevance of the information, and incorrect modalities for learning. To help them, the teacher needs to provide an appropriate and interesting media in order to enable them to comprehend the reading text well. Alternative media surely make students have more motivation to study. Every teacher must have good teaching media to make his or her teaching more interesting and motivating. Besides, by using media the teacher will be easier to show to the learners about what he or she is teaching. So, in teaching reading comprehension, the teacher also needs media in order to make students interested and motivated. Broadly, there are two kinds of media: visual media and audio visual media. Visual media is something used in which concern with the learners' sight sense. The aim of using visual aid or media in teaching English is to help teacher improving teaching learning process, including motivating students. Furthermore, the aids which concerning with the sense sight of the learner are visual aids. Visual means concerned with used in seeing, while media is something that helps. In other words visual media is something used in which concern with the learners' sight sense and can be seen by them. Generally this media is available in the classroom or it can be made by teacher himself.

One of the suggested media in teaching reading skill is called comic strips. Liu (2004) defines comic strip as “a series of pictures inside boxes that tell a story”. He puts forward, the effect comic strips on reading comprehension largely depends on the quality of the repetition effect. When readers are able to integrate the information from the text and from the illustration, these two works “as if the information was presented twice, thus enhancing performance”.

A comic strip is defined in this study as a series of pictures inside boxes that tell a story. Comic strip is a genre of popular literature that represented by both visual and textual means. The story is, similarly to film, divided into particular pictures. The text is condensed into bubbles and panels, and is attached to the pictures. Among visual genres, comic strips catch many researchers’ attention because they are communicative, popular, accessible, readable, and they combine aesthetic perception with intellectual pursuit. Comic strips have been suggested as classroom material due to their broad appeal to almost any age group or learner level because they depict real dialogue and culture. Students enjoy the simple style and amusing characters, while at the same time get proven practice in their reading skills. Comic strips can be used efficiently for this purpose especially among junior high school students. They bring a cheerful atmosphere into the class. During the past decade, numerous journal articles have introduced techniques for using comic strips in education and particularly in language classrooms.

In general, it can be claimed that comic strips are not only used for fun in a language class, but there are also methodological reasons for teachers to use them. Comic strips provide the structure and stimulus to which students respond. Since stories are universal, students from different cultures can understand their structure and identify themselves with the characters. This helps them to acquire vocabulary, grammatical and communicative competence and provides them with special cultural knowledge as well.

This media supports the students in understanding the text in reading activity, especially in comprehending a descriptive text. In School-based Curriculum (KTSP), the standard competence taught to Year-7 students of Junior High School in the first semester states that students need to understand the functional written text and very simple short essay in form of descriptive texts (Kumalarini, 2008). A descriptive text identifies and describes a person or an object.

Based on the background, it is significant to conduct a research using comic strips as the media to teach English reading comprehension. It may help the teacher to build a good teaching environment and also to motivate students in learning English reading comprehension. The research will focus on applying the comic strips in teaching English reading comprehension of descriptive texts.

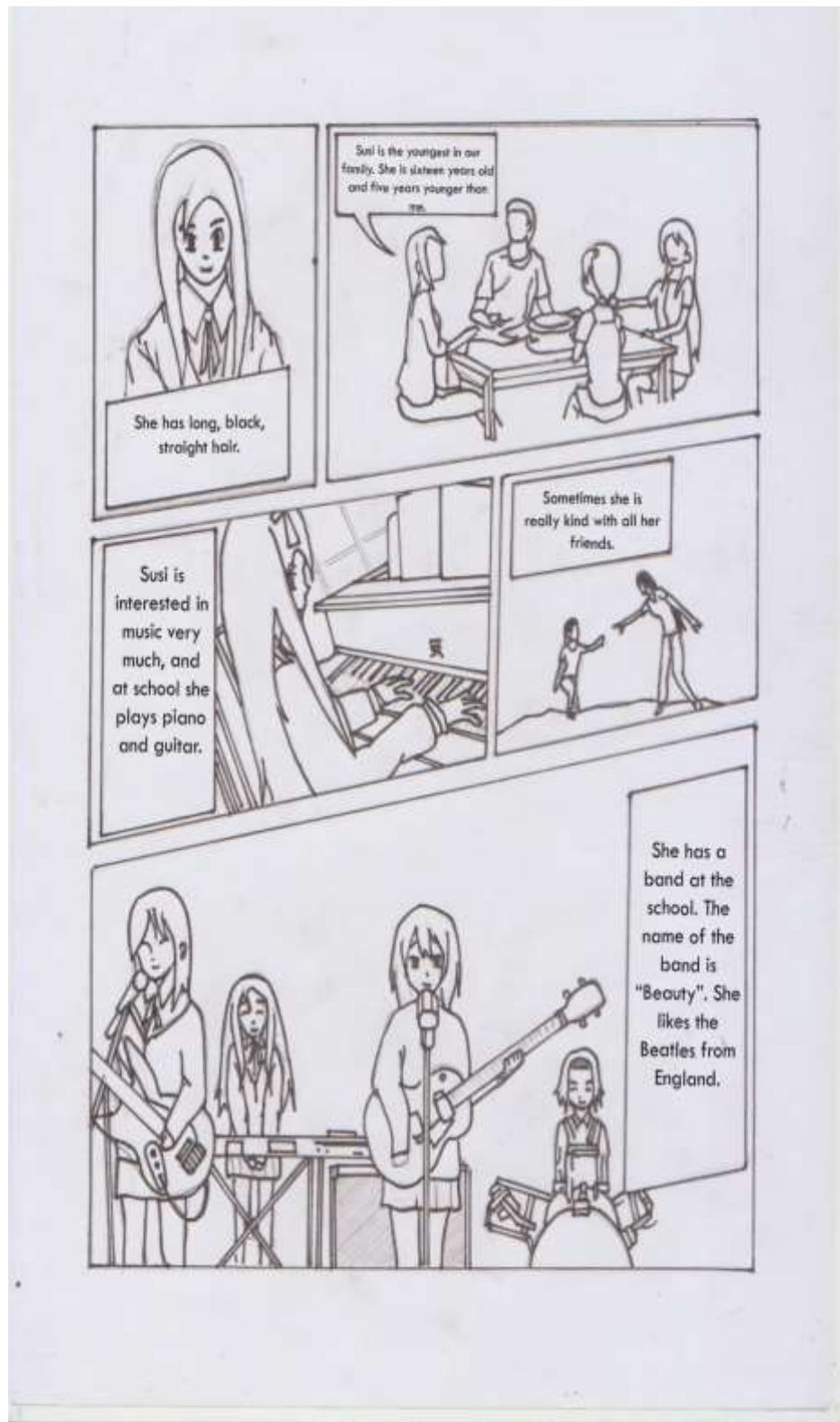


Figure: Comic Strip

METHOD

The purpose of this research is to know how effective is teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text through comic strips to students. The research is a quantitative research. Muijs (2004) claims that quantitative research is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematical based methods (in particular statistic). Kerlinger cited in Cohen (2007) refers quasi experimental situations to ‘compromise designs’, an apt description when applied to much educational research where the random selection or random assignment of schools and classrooms is quite impracticable. Cohen (2007) explains that one of the most commonly used quasi-experimental designs in educational research can be represented follows:

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| <i>Experimental</i> | <i>O₁</i> | <i>X</i> | <i>O₂</i> |
| | ----- | | |
| <i>Control</i> | <i>O₃</i> | | <i>O₄</i> |

Scheme: A quasi-experimental design

The above design shows that *O₁* is observation 1, the observation to see the condition of experimental group before the treatment, *X* as the treatment, *O₂* as observation 2, the observation to see the condition of experimental group after the treatment, *O₃* as observation 3, the observation to see the condition of control group before the usual teaching learning process is applied, and *O₄* as observation 4, the observation to see the condition of control group after the usual teaching learning process is applied.

This research used purposive sampling to choose one of the classes into experimental group and the other one into the control group. The classes were taken from the population. After that, pre-test is given to the two classes and measured the student’s individual score and means score of the students. Then, the treatment is given to the experimental group. Next, the post-test is given to both classes. Lastly, the result of the test is analyzed to compute the effectiveness of the media.

Of all clustered, two clusters are selected to be the research sample. One cluster is selected as the experimental group, and another cluster as the control group. These clusters are VII B as the experimental group and VII C as the control group.

Drolet (2010) has outlined several steps of teaching reading comprehension using comic strips. The steps are as follows: (1) The teacher gives each student a copy of the comic strips. (2) The teacher tells the students that they will be reading these comic strips. However, before reading the the teacher will talk about a few things. (3) The teacher asks the students some leading questions to activate prior knowledge about character traits and physical description. (4) The students then do a quick reading of the comic strips to get a basic idea of the contents. (5) When they are finished, the teacher explains or give definitions of the difficult vocabulary words. (6) Then the teacher asks the students to tell what they think of each character. (7) Students then write down a list of the character in

the comic strips and list of the descriptive adjectives they can see. (8) Once they have complete the list, they can answer some questions in the form of multiple choice questions.

The written text will be in form of close-ended question. It consists of 30 items of multiple-choice. To make the test valid, the test is written based on the table of specification. If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless. Validity is used to show the accuracy of the test items based on the students' level of reading skill. The following table show the test item table of specification.

Table 1
Specification of the Test Items

| Aspects | Question Number | Total |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Vocabularies in context (simple present tense) | 9, 10, 19, 20, 29, 30 | 6 |
| Supporting details (information about parts, qualities, characteristics) | 1, 3, 7, 11, 13, 17, 21, 23, 27 | 9 |
| Inference (Use of detailed Noun Phrase to give information about the subject) | 2, 5, 6, 12, 15, 16, 22, 25, 26 | 9 |
| Pronoun referent (Focus on specific participants) | 4, 8, 14, 18, 24, 28 | 6 |
| Total Items | | 30 |

After the test was written based on the table of specification, it is tried out to measure the test reability. Reliability of the test refers to the consistency of the test result. The reliability of the try out test is 0.62 which is categorized as substantial.

In order to know the effectiveness of teaching reading comprehension on descriptive text through comic strips the following formula (Beins B & McCarthy, 2012) is applied.

$$ES = \frac{MD_e - MD_c}{Sp}$$

Based on Cohen's cited in Muijs (2004) the effect size can be categorized as: weak effect if the result 0-0.20, modest effect if 0.21-0.50, moderate effect if 0.51-1.00, and strong effect if more than 1.00.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

Research Result

After conducting a research in teaching English reading comprehension of descriptive texts using comic strips to Year-7 students of “SMPN 22 Pontianak” in Academic Year 2014/2015, the data were analyzed to answer the research question and to test the hypothesis. The data will be shown in the following table.

Table 2

| Group | M ₁ | M ₂ | MD |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|------|
| Experimental | 66.83 | 76.1 | 9.27 |
| Control | 65.03 | 70.33 | 5.3 |

The difference of mean score of experimental group (MD_E) and control group (MD_C) are computed respectively as follows:

$$MD_E = 76.1 - 66.83 = 9.27, \text{ and}$$

$$MD_C = 70.33 - 65.03 = 5.3$$

It is found out that the students’ ability in reading comprehension of descriptive texts is increased by Comic strips. The result of the pre-test shows that the mean score of the experimental group is 66.83 and the result of the post-test shows the mean score of experimental group is 76.1. The interval between the mean score of pre-test and post-test is 9.27. It means that the ability of the students in the experimental group increased highly after the treatment was conducted.

The standard deviations of experimental group (SD_E) and control group (SD_C) are 5.53 and 7.3 respectively. The detailed computation is as follows:

$$SD_E = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 - \left[\frac{(\sum x)^2}{N}\right]}{N}}$$

$$= 5.53, \text{ and}$$

$$SD_C = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 - \left[\frac{(\sum x)^2}{N}\right]}{N}}$$

$$= 7.3$$

The pooled standard deviation is 6.5. The computation is detailed as follows:

$$SD_{pooled} = \sqrt{\frac{(N_E - 1)SD_E^2 + (N_C - 1)SD_C^2}{N_E + N_C - 2}}$$

$$= 6.5$$

To answer the research problem, the data are computed using Effect Size (ES) formula. The computation is as follows:

$$ES = \frac{MD_E - MD_C}{Sp}$$

$$= 0.61$$

The research result shows that the effect size of using comic strips to teach English reading comprehension of descriptive texts to Year-7 students of SMPN 22 Pontianak in Academic Year 2014/2015 is 0.61. This effect size is bigger than 0.51 and less than 1.00. It is categorized moderate.

Table 3
The Qualification of Effectiveness is as Follow

| Effect size | Qualification |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 0 – 0.20 | Weak effect |
| 0.21 – 0.50 | Modest effect |
| 0.51 – 1.00 | Moderate effect |
| > 1.00 | Strong effect |

(Cohen's cited in Muijs (2004, p. 139))

Discussion

In this research, the first step to be administered was conducted measurement before treatment in both experimental and control group. The measurements before treatment were in form of multiple choices with 30 questions. After administering the measurement, treatments were given using comic strips to the experimental group. Treatments were given twice to make sure that there is no simple judgement of the effectiveness using the technique. Post-test of experimental group was conducted in order to get the score of students' ability in reading comprehension after being treated twice by comic strips. Then, Post-test of control group was conducted in order to get the score of students' ability in reading comprehension. The score is compared to experimental group's post test result. After conducting the points above, the result of the tests was analyzed to get the findings.

The effectiveness of using Comic strips to teach English reading comprehension of descriptive texts is moderate. It can be due to the obstacles during the research. The first obstacle was about the time management. The time allocation in lesson plan changed due to the change of the school schedule. The treatment was interrupted by the break time for the students to clean up the class

and school environment. The next obstacle was about the condition of the classroom during the treatment was conducted. The classroom is not completed with air conditioner (AC) or fan. The students felt not comfortable to learn in such a classroom. It was expressed by the students by complaining the temperature in the classroom. It made the concentration of the students not focused and discomfort. King and Marans cited in Schneider (2000) claim that the students' achievement and task-performance deteriorate because of the temperature and humidity increase. Another obstacle was about class management. The students were very noisy. Since the students were enthusiastic in learning, it would make them noisy so the teacher has to manage them well. Although the teacher tried to overcome the problem, he did not succeed well.

If the above mentioned obstacles could be overcome well, teaching English reading comprehension of descriptive texts using Comic strips can be more effective. As research has shown, the comic strip format provides a powerful combination of discursive skills, artistic creativity and expression; its use can scaffold to more difficult disciplines outside of the language classroom. The use of comic strip has been suggested as a model to be used to help students develop their reading skills. Moreover, students enjoy the simple style and amusing characters, while at the same time get proven practice in their reading skills. The comic strip, with its static form, is potentially very strong in language instruction because students can read the text at their own pace. When compared to other forms of mass media, a comic strip can be seen as superior. If a student is watching TV or a movie, the dialogue is quick, and once it has passed, it is difficult for a student to review. In this age of video and DVD, the viewer could easily stop the movie or show and watch the scene over and over, but that halts the flow of the dialogue and is unnatural. With a comic strip, the student can easily go at his own pace and not lose the flow of the context.

The finding of this research is supported by visual aid. The visualisation in the students' mind by using visual helps the students to recognize the words in the texts automatically. Hence, it is easy for them to imagine the texts in their mind. The guided questions given by the researcher also help the students to get the point easily.

The use of comic strip also have disadvantages that may give problems to the teacher. The disadvantages are described bellow:

- a. It spend a lot of money and time to prepare the media. The teacher should be creative to create his own comic strips and this need more time for the preparation.
- b. Not all the students like the comic strips provided by the teacher.

Although the application of Comic strips to teach English reading comprehension of descriptive texts is moderate, the improvement of the students' reading skill is far better than control group. Comic strips can be categorized as moderately effective used by the teacher to teach English reading comprehension of narrative text to Year-7 students of "SMPN 22 Pontianak" in Academic Year 2014/2015.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the result of the data analysis, the effect size of Comic strips is 0.61 and it is categorized moderate. It means that comic strips improves the students' reading comprehension skill. It is supported by the increase of experimental group's mean score. The mean score of experimental group's pre-test is 66.83 and the mean score of experimental group's post-test is 76.1. It means that the interval of pre-test and post-test is 9.27. The improvement of the students' skill performance in reading comprehension after the treatment was conducted is very high. The standard deviation of experimental group (SD_E) (5.53) is higher and better than the standard deviation of control group (SD_C) (7.3). To conclude, the picture in comic strips could help the students comprehend the text well. They could recognize the words in the texts automatically as they were supposed to be. The hypothesis of "The effectiveness of Comic Strips to teach English reading comprehension of descriptive texts to Year-7 students of SMPN 22 Pontianak in Academic Year 2014/2015 is moderate if the effect size is 0.51-1.00" is accepted.

Suggestions

Based on the data analysis of the research and the conclusions, the researcher would like to give some suggestions as follows: (1) English teacher needs to choose alternative media and aware the use of appropriate media to teach reading especially the use of comic strips. (2) It is suggested to the English teacher to apply this media because it can motivate the students to learn and make the students more active in the class. (3) In using this media, make sure that English teacher has very well preparation. (4) English teacher is suggested to give a clear instruction how to read Comic strips to the students to avoid misunderstanding in performing English reading comprehension. (5) The existence of the pictures helped the students to understand the story and get the meaning of the certain word. (6) Comic strips can be applied but it is required to pay attention to the time management, classroom condition, and class management.

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